

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-14

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H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 160

USDEL JEC PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SAIGON 6329

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: A VC " BACK TO THE VILLAGE" CAMPAIGN IN KIEN HOA

THE FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON FROM CAN THO 13 APR 73

REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE:

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: A VC " BACK TO THE VILLAGE" CAMPAIGN IN KIEN HOA

1. SUMMARY: THE FOLLOWING REPORT FROM FSO WILLIAM KRUG IN KIEN HOA PRESENTS A GOOD ILLUSTRATION OF VC POST- CEASEFIRE ATTEMPTS TO ENTICE PEOPLE BACK TO VC CONTROLLED AREAS IN MR IV. SIMILAR VC EFFORTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED BY VICE CONSULS FROM OTHER PROVINCES IN MR IV SINCE THE CEASEFIRE. IN ADDITION TO INCREASED VC TERRORISM AND STOCKPILING OF MUNITIONS, THE BACK TO THE VILLAGE CAMPAIGN MAY BE A PART OF THE VC EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF THEIR BATTERED KIEN HOA MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. A CAMERA CREW FROM VC MR II HEADQUARTERS IS REPORTEDLY IN KIEN HOA VISITING AT LEAST TWO DISTRICTS -- DON NHON AND TRUC
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GIANG. IN THE LATTER, THE VC ARE TRYING TO RE- ESTABLISH THEIR CONTROL OF TWO VILLAGES ALONG THE BA LAI RIVER IN THE NORTHERN

HUU DINH FOREST, THE SITE OF A VC MINI- BASE.

3. IN MID-1972, AS PART OF A SPECIAL PACIFICATION PROGRAM, THE GVN MOVED PEOPLE FROM THE PERIPHERY OF THE FOREST TO A MORE SECURE AREA ALONG A NEARBY GVN CONTROLLED ROAD. IN SEPTEMBER 1972R TO THAT QUESTION. WE CONTINUE TO NOTE THE APPEAR- ANCE OF THESE ALLEGATIONS IN A VARIETY OF MEDIA IN THE AREA, AND WE CONTINUE TO REGRET THAT FACT.

I DON' T KNOW HOW OUR DENIALS COULD HAVE BEEN MORE CATEGORI- CAL; AND WE HAVE THESE ABSOLUTELY LUDICROUS CHARGES BY YOUSSEF ARAFAT THIS MORNING WITH RESPECT TO AMBASSADOR MEYER, WHICH I HAVE TO CALL " LUDICROUS." YOU STACK THES FALSEHOODS ON TOP OF EACH OTHER AND YOU GET QUITE A TISSUE OF LIES.

TO TURN IT AROUND, IT SEEMS IRRESPONSIBLE OF MR. ARAFAT -- WHO SHOULD KNOW BETTER -- TO MAKE CHARGES LIKE THIS, AND UNSEEMLY IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, GIVEN THE INCREASINGLY APPARENT INTERCONNECTION OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PALES- TINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, ON THE ONE HAND, AND BLACK SEPTEMBER, ON THE OTHER.

THIS IRRESPONSIBLE KIND OF BEHAVIOR BY MEN LIKE ARAFAT AND THE EXTREMIST TACTICS OF A SMALL GROUP OF CONSPIRATORS
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RISKS DOING SOME DAMAGE, OVER THE LONGER TERM, TO THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIANS -- MOST OF WHOM, BY OUR JUDGMENT OF THE MATTER, SEEM MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN PROGRESS TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT OF THE MAIN POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

TO PUT IT DIFFERENTLY, WE CAN DERIVE SOME SATISFACTION FROM THE FACT THET THE VOICES OF MODERATION AMONG THE PALESTINIANS STILL CLEARLY HAVE THE UPPER HAND -- ALTHOJGH THE TACTICS OF A FEW HAVE CAPTURED THE HEADLINES IN RECENT MONTHS.

NOW, I OUGHT TO ADD TO THAT, I SUPPOSE, THAT, FOR ITS PART, THE UNITED STATES HAS ALWAYS RECOGNIZED THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIANS AND EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO TAKE THOSE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS INTO ACCOUNT IN ANY SETTLE- MENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Q. ACCORDING TO ONE STORY I SAY, THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT ONE EVIDENCE OF U. S. COMPLICITY IS THAT THE ISRAELI COMMANDOES -- OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL THEM -- USED AMERICAN WEAPONS. COULD YOU RECALL WHAT KIND OF WEAPONS THE ARAB TERRORISTS USED IN EXECUTING OUR TWO

DIPLOMATS IN KHARTOUM -- WHAT THEY USED?

A. I'D HAVE TO CHECK.

Q. IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE SO FAR THAT THESE ACCUSATIONS ARE BEING FOLLOWED UP BY ANY ACTIONS AGAINST AMERICAN CITIZENS OR AMERICAN INTEREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. NO ACTIONS OF WHICH I'M AWARE. OBVIOUSLY, IT IS OUR HOPE THAT BY CONTINUING TO DENY THE TRUTH OF THESE ALLEGATIONS WE CAN THEREBY AVOID ANY ACTIONS OF THAT KIND.

WE WERE CONCERNED TO NOTE THIS MORNING A PROMISE BY MR. ARAFAT -- WHETHER HE'S SPEAKING FOR THE PLO OR THE BSO IS NOT CLEAR IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES -- A PROMISE BY MR. ARAFAT THAT SOME MAJOR COUNTERACTION WAS PRESUMABLY AGAINST AMERICAN INTERESTS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER, WAS IN CONTEMPLATION BY THE GUERRILLAS.

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Q. DID YOU NOTICE THIS MORNING THAT RADIO MOSCOW CARRIED A REPORT IN WHICH IT REPEATED ALLEGATIONS; AND IS THERE ANY PLAN TO CALL AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THIS?

A. LET ME HOLD OFF A BIT WITH RESPECT TO ANY FORMAL FOLLOW-THROUGH. AND ONE HAS TO SAY THAT THAT BROADCAST WAS UNWELCOME IN THIS CAPITAL, FOR ALL OF THE REASONS WE'VE BEEN THROUGH IN THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS.

Q. YOU SAID EARLIER THAT IT'S THE AMERICAN POSITION THAT "THE VOICE OF MODERATION STILL HAS THE UPPER HAND AMONG THE PALESTINIANS." HOW IS THAT?

A. TWO THINGS COULD BE SAID: THE FIRST IS THAT IN THE BLACK SEPTEMBER ORGANIZATION, OR EVEN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE LESS RESPONSIBLE ELEMENTS AMONG THE FEDAYEEN. WE ARE DEALING WITH A SMALL NUMBER OF ANARCHISTS, EXTREMISTS, TERRORISTS -- WHATEVER YOU MAY WISH TO CALL THEM.

THE OTHER IS SIMPLY A JUDGMENT CALL ON OUR PART WHICH I THINK IS WIDELY SHARED IN AND OUT OF THE AREA, AND THAT IS THAT THIS KIND OF BEHAVIOR IS BROADLY REPUGNANT TO THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES IN THE AREA, AND RECOGNIZED AS UNLIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE POLITICAL END THEY SEEK, AND THE LEGITIMACY OF WHICH WE HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED HERE.

Q. IS THIS THE FIRST TIME A U. S. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN HAS SAID THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PLO OR THE BLACK

SEPTEMBER IS INTERCONNECTED? AND IF SO, DO WE HAVE EVIDENCE OF THAT?

A. I AM JUST TRYING TO RECALL IN RESPONSE TO YOUR FIRST QUESTION AND I CAN'T SAFELY. I KNOW THAT IT HAS BEEN WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED IN THIS CAPITAL AND OTHERS IN RECENT MONTHS.

NOW IN RESPONSE TO YOUR SECOND QUESTION, I HAVE TO SAY THAT WE ARE SATISFIED OF THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE BLACK SEPTEMBER ORGANIZATION AND AT LEAST SOME OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PLO.

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LET ME JUST ADD ON BACKGROUND YOU HAVE TO DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS FROM MR. ARAFAT'S WILLINGNESS YESTERDAY, TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF SO EXPLICITLY WITH THE BSO LEADERSHIP AND TO SUPPORT ITS CALLS TO VIOLENCE IN THE AREA.

I'M NOT CERTAIN HE UNDERSTOOD FULLY, WHAT HE IS DOING.

Q. THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, YOU MENTIONED THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING ADVISING TRAVELERS TO STAY OUT OF THE MIDDLE EAST. ARE YOU STILL, OR ARE YOU NOW --

A. NO, I THINK WE ARE STILL CONSIDERING.

I DOUBT THAT THERE ARE MANY AMERICANS IN THIS COUNTRY OR ABROAD WHO ARE NOT AWARE OF THE STORY AND THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS, AND ARE MAKING THEIR PLANS ACCORDINGLY.

IN SHORT, THIS MAY BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE FORUM FROM WHICH TO ADDRESS THAT.

Q. SOME OFFICIALS IN THIS BUILDING IN THE PAST HAVE SUGGESTED THAT OVERT PLO GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES ARE INTENDED TO FRUSTRATE SOME MOVEMENTS TOWARD PEACE BETWEEN THE ARABS AND THE ISRAELIS.

WAS THERE ANY NEW EFFORT BY THE UNITED STATES UNDER WAY TOWARDS THIS LARGER GOAL OF BRINGING THE ARABS AND ISRAELIS TOGETHER, WHICH HAS BEEN FRUSTRATED BY THE NICOSIA INCIDENT AND --

A. HARD TO JUDGE, I THINK.

IT HAS BEEN OUR VIEW THROUGH RECENT MONTHS, WHICH WE HAVE EXPRESSED PRIVATELY AS WELL AS PUBLICLY, THAT THE

NECESSARY NEXT STEP IN THAT REGARD WAS THE DECISION BY THE
GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED TO ENTER INTO SOMETHING WHICH
MIGHT AT A MINIMUM, BE DESCRIBED AS AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS
AND IDEAS -- AND MORE POSITIVELY, MIGHT TAKE THE FORM OF
SOMETHING MORE AKIN TO A NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

NOW, STOPPING AT THAT POINT AND GOING TO THE NEXT STEP:
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THE HISTORY OF THE AREA SUGGESTS THAT IT IS EXTREMELY
DIFFICULT TO --

TO TURN IT AROUND, THAT THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE, WHEN IT
HAD BEEN IN EVIDENCE, HAS NOT HAD

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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